

SPEECH

[Henry S.]

OF

MR. FOOTE, OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE

ADMISSION OF CALIFORNIA.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, AUGUST 1, 1850.

The Senate having under consideration bill No. 169, for the admission of California as a State into the Union, Mr. FOOTE said :

I cannot say that I am at all distressed at having so plausible an excuse for declaring my views upon the pending question this morning to the Senate as has been supplied by certain honorable gentlemen who have been pleased to refer in a manner calling for special notice from me, to the attitude and avowed policy of the State which I have the honor in part to represent here, touching the secession movements which appear to have been resolved upon by certain persons in the State of South Carolina. Sir, the State of Mississippi has been occasionally given credit for the avowal of doctrines and designs as abhorrent to her whole people as such accursed doctrines and designs could possibly be to the citizens of any State in this Confederacy. The honorable gentlemen from Virginia (Mr. MASON) has chosen to give us something of a discourse, just now, upon what he calls the Missouri Compromise. I think, by this time, we ought to be able to understand what the *old Missouri Compromise* meant, and that we can hardly stand in need of such incessant lectures upon its history and general merits. But, sir, let me ask, Does not the honorable Senator from Virginia know that the Nashville Convention has *not* recommended the adoption of the old Missouri Compromise? He enlarges upon the force and dignity of *precedent*. He speaks of the sanction of time. He informs us that the Southern States have repeatedly heretofore manifested their disposition to observe the Missouri Compromise—the *old Missouri Compromise*. I ask again, emphatically, of the honorable Senator from Virginia—who has doubtless watched the movements of the day very closely, and is quite familiar with the proceedings of that body called the Nashville Convention—has he not yet ascertained the fact, that, according to the political doctors of South Carolina, the old Missouri Compromise was repudiated by that body, and that they only proposed to run the line of 36 deg. 30 min. to the Pacific for the purpose of dividing the territory between the North and the South, *as property*? Such is the fact. I challenge denial. Now, sir, I, as a true Missouri Compromise man, must say that the mere line of 36 deg. 30 min., as a line for the purpose of dividing the supposed landed estates of the North and the South respectively, is to me a great and ridiculous absurdity; and I call upon those who have heretofore united with me in supporting the Missouri Compromise, according to its ancient meaning, to join me once more in sustaining and enforcing it against all the false teachers of the present hour, who, whilst professing to respect it, are openly exhibiting towards it the most signal contempt. I emphatically assert that if the reputed author of the Nashville address is to be be-

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lieved on this subject, the honorable Senator from Virginia is totally in error in supposing that the Nashville Convention attached its sanction, in the least possible degree, to the old Missouri Compromise. Therefore, what the honorable Senator from Virginia has said on this subject is entirely alien to the question before us.

Permit me to offer one or two additional remarks in regard to my own position touching the Missouri Compromise. It is known that I have always voted for it whenever it has been proposed here; that I have labored strenuously for years past to procure its adoption, and I have, several weeks ago, given a minute history of my exertions in this behalf, which will leave no doubt upon the mind of any unprejudiced man in regard to my zeal and sincerity in urging the Missouri Compromise upon the Senate and the country. I shall not now recapitulate statements formerly made, and which, I hope, honorable Senators have not yet forgotten, showing the extraordinary efforts which I have thought it my duty to make for the purpose of obtaining the sanction of Congress for the Missouri Compromise. I will not again expatiate upon the fact, which is, however, undisputable, that until within a few months past I found myself almost entirely unaided from the South in my efforts to bring about the re-enactment of the Compromise. - I beg leave, Mr. President, though, to remind you of what you can, indeed, never forget, that about the beginning of this session you were written to by a distinguished Pennsylvania statesman, (Mr. Buchanan,) for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the Southern members of Congress would be content with the Missouri Compromise as a plan of adjusting the vexed territorial question. I had written to him repeatedly before, urging him to throw before the country his views upon the subject, hoping that thus recommended, the ancient popularity of this time-honored measure might be restored. You recollect, sir, that you were directed to consult with me upon the subject, and to report our joint opinion as to the possibility of any good arising from such a publication as I had urged, and to report our joint opinion also as to whether the Missouri Compromise was then likely to prove acceptable to the Southern members of Congress. Well, sir, we did consult. We did scrutinize the two Houses of Congress. We did both come to the conclusion—reluctantly and painfully—that the Missouri Compromise had lost favor in the eyes of Southern men; and you wrote in reply, giving our united opinion that a mere declaration by Mr. Buchanan of his known views upon the subject would prove embarrassing to him, and injurious to his standing in the South, without at all benefitting the country. Sir, this state of things continued, as you well know, for some time. Nobody mentioned the Missouri Compromise, either here or in the other branch of Congress, (except with certain serious modifications,) until that Adjustment bill, the defeat of which has now occurred, had been brought forward, was apparently growing quite popular, and was likely, by its adoption, once more to restore quiet and concord to the country; when suddenly certain distinguished gentlemen, (led on by the honorable Senator from Florida, Mr. Yulee, who has been an open opponent of the Missouri Compromise whenever it was presented here heretofore, who has denounced it in his place at all times,) I say, certain distinguished gentlemen, following the lead of the very distinguished gentleman from Florida, who sometimes rises in our midst and delivers solemn lectures upon political consistency, resolved to unite with him as they have done most heartily and most fiercely, in urging upon Con-

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gress and the country the Missouri Compromise—no, not the Missouri Compromise, but the Missouri Compromise line, as an *ultimatum*. This is all history, sir, and history, too, that cannot be disputed. So much for the Missouri Compromise, its former opponents, and present friends!

Now, sir, I will notice as concisely as practicable, the doctrinal portions of the speeches with which we have been favored by the honorable Senators to whom I am specially responding. One of them—the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. BUTLER)—seems to regard the whole South, or at least a majority of the Southern States of the Union, pledged to sustain the principles for which he has contended in our hearing on this occasion. The other of them—the honorable Senator from Virginia, (Mr. MASON)—particularizes certain States by name, and declares that they all stand committed to the disorganizing notions which he has so formally paraded before us. It would have given me great pleasure, Mr. President, to have found it in my power to harmonize with these gentlemen, both in opinion and in action, at this momentous crisis in our national affairs. But I find it impossible to do so. And I beg leave to assure these gentlemen that they have grossly mistaken the attitude of the State of Mississippi in the contest now pending. Sir, the State of Mississippi did not unite with South Carolina formerly in supporting the doctrines of nullification. We had but a small body of avowed nullifiers in our whole State; and nearly all of them have since, either tacitly or by open declaration, acknowledge their former error in asserting the right of a single State to invalidate a law of the whole Union. At this moment the State of Mississippi occupies the precise ground which was occupied by our convention last autumn, over the deliberations of which body a worthy gentleman presided who is most probably at the present moment in hearing of all that I am now saying. Sir, our State last autumn, as she now does, protested most solemnly against the enactment of the Wilmot proviso, and other kindred measures, the adoption of which was then so seriously menaced. She recommended a resort to all constitutional measures of redress, and proposed the scheme of a Southern Convention. The proceedings of our convention did not look to the destruction of the Union, but the preservation of it, by maintaining the Constitution inviolate to which that Union owed its existence. We demanded the maintenance of the Union, as established by the Constitution; and our avowed object in proposing the Nashville Convention was to bring about the adoption of such measures of redress and conciliation as might vindicate the integrity of the Constitution, and rescue the Union itself from impending ruin. Such has been the declaration which I have constantly made here in regard to the character and objects of our Mississippi Convention. Nor have I yet been contradicted on this subject in any quarter. I assure you, sir, that Mississippi did not send one delegate to the Nashville Convention who was a *disunionist per se*. No delegate from the State of Mississippi entertained any such views as those which have been recently promulgated by Mr. Rhett, of South Carolina, Judge Tucker, of Virginia, and their illustrious compeers, some of whom I intend to notice presently in a very special manner. I am speaking, as all will perceive, with proper coolness and circumspection; and as Chief Justice Sharkey is himself in our midst, it will be quite easy for honorable gentlemen who at all doubt the accuracy of my statements on this head, to subject me to refutation by bringing him forward to testify against me, if, indeed, I am at all in error in

supposing him, and those who, with him, represented the State of Mississippi in the Nashville Convention, as utterly opposed to the dangerous and, as I think, treasonable doctrines which have been recently promulgated by certain disunion doctors in and out of South Carolina. Yes, sir, I will go further, and say to honorable gentlemen that if, upon consulting Judge Sharkey and other gentlemen, now also present, who occupied seats in the Nashville Convention, they do not find them all full of indignation and disgust at the course pursued since the adjournment of the convention by Mr. Rhett and his allies, then I will resign my seat here, and give way to some one more sagacious than myself, and more capable of ascertaining the opinions of those with whom I am allowed to converse freely and unreservedly upon the public questions of the day. Now, sir, what is the precise doctrine which honorable gentlemen undertake to assert here to-day? Why, if I understand them, they insist that, whenever a State of this Union, *with or without just cause*, chooses to resist the authority of the General Government, and secede from the Union, her right so to proceed must be at once recognised by the Government, and is, indeed, a matter beyond reasonable question. Yes, sir, this is the position taken here to-day, and which honorable gentlemen conceive the whole South, inclusive of the State of Mississippi, pledged to maintain, even by arms if necessary. Now, sir, I wish to be understood as never having been one of those who supposed that a State would in no case be justifiable in seceding from the Union. On the contrary, I have repeatedly declared here in my place, that I did not all doubt the right of a State thus to act, under certain circumstances. Never have I held that a State of the Union, or any portion of our free people, are bound to submit to intolerable oppression. The Union is, indeed, in my estimation, of inappreciable value; but the Union itself would be worthless without that liberty and happiness which it was intended to secure. Describe to me a case of intolerable oppression, and I will at once acknowledge that, in such a case, secession would be justifiable. I will go further, and say, as I have often declared here and elsewhere, that any attempt on the part of the Federal Government to interfere seriously with the rights of the South, in connexion with the subject of domestic slavery, if consummated, would justify a resort to secession; for this would be, in my judgment, the most grievous and intolerable wrong which could be perpetrated upon the Southern States. Thus far am I a secessionist. I will not take it upon myself to say that secession in such a case as the one just described would be a *constitutional* remedy. Great statesmen have differed on this point, and will perhaps never agree. Whether it be, though, a constitutional or a revolutionary remedy, it is, perhaps, of no practical importance to determine. The remedy certainly exists in some form, and may be justifiably resorted to in case of real and ruinous oppression, when all other remedies fail. I confess that I have been always inclined to agree with General Jackson in supposing it to be a revolutionary remedy. Certain it is that its successful enforcement would have the effect of overturning the Government, and I have been in the habit of regarding that as a revolutionary in its character which must be necessarily productive of this result. Perhaps Philip P. Barbour was correct in describing secession as "the political arsenic of our system, never to be resorted to except when all other remedies prove inefficient." Surely, sir, it cannot be successfully contended that there is a right, strictly *constitutional* in its character, pos-

sessed by each one of the sovereign States of this Union to secede from the Union at pleasure. Such a proposition really seems almost too absurd to deserve serious consideration. Let us see how it would work in practice. Suppose the State of Delaware to-morrow to secede from the Union without the allegation of any special reason, and without any existing ground of complaint in regard to the oppressive action of the Government. The President of the United States is bound to maintain the Constitution inviolate, and to see that the laws of the Republic are duly enforced. One of the objects of the Constitution, as declared in its own preamble, was "to form a more perfect Union" than existed under the confederation. The Union provided for in the articles of confederation was a "perpetual Union." Will any one doubt that in the case of attempted secession just specified, it would be the duty of the President to preserve the Union, to prevent secession, by the employment of all the constitutional power intrusted to him, and, by doing so "to the best of his ability, to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution" itself? But if this would be the President's duty in such a case, will any man insist, notwithstanding, that the right of secession, as a constitutional right, could be justifiably exercised on the part of the seceding State? Could Delaware have a right to secede, and the President also be authorized at the same time to prevent her from seceding? See how these repugnant constitutional principles would conflict with each other. Delaware, in the exercise of a constitutional right, withdraws from the Union; the President, co-operating with Congress, brings her back into the Union. In a month or two she takes another disunion fit, and dashes out of the Union a second time: again she is brought back. And so this action and counteraction may go on forever, according to honorable gentlemen, without the Constitution itself being in the least degree violated on either side. But suppose the State of Louisiana to secede from the Union without just cause; each of the sovereign States of the Confederacy has a right, under the Constitution, as is now urged upon us, to separate from her sister States at her own pleasure. Suppose Louisiana, after such secession, to establish a tariff of duties grossly injurious to the States and Territories situated upon the banks of the Mississippi and its tributaries; or suppose her, on seceding, to open the port of New Orleans to the commerce of all nations, free of duty, thus destroying at once the whole revenue system of the Republic: would it be the constitutional duty of all the States thus subjected to injury, and of the Union itself, pettently to submit to all the consequences growing out of such an act of secession? If not, they would have a right, and would doubtless exercise it, of employing preventive means adequate to avert such a ruinous state of things. And, then, would arise the same conflict of repugnant constitutional principles already described as arising in the case of Delaware. I will not detain the Senate with a tedious argument on this point, but will bring to the notice of honorable gentlemen the teachings of two illustrious Democratic statesmen, whose opinions have always commanded the most profound respect of their countrymen. I refer to Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson.

Mr. Jefferson, in the year 1825, in a letter to William B. Giles, thus expressed himself:

"Take together the decisions of the federal court, the doctrine of the President, and the mis-constructions of the constitutional compact acted on by the legislature of the federal branch, and it is but too evident that the three ruling branches of that department are in combination to strip their colleagues, the State authorities, of the powers reserved by them, and to exercise themselves all functions, foreign and domestic."

He continues:

"And what is our resource for the preservation of the Constitution? Reason and argument? You might as well reason and argue with the marble columns encircling them. The representatives chosen by ourselves? They are joined in the combination—some from incorrect views of government, some from corrupt ones, sufficient, voting together, to outnumber the sound parts, and, with majorities only of one, two, or three, bold enough to go forward in defiance. Are we, then, to stand to our arms with the hot-headed Georgian? No, that must be the last resource, not to be thought of until much longer and greater sufferings. If every infraction of a compact of so many parties is to be resisted at once as a dissolution of it, none can be formed which would last one year. We must have patience and longer endurance, then, with our brethren while under delusion; give them time for reflection and experience of consequences; keep ourselves in a situation to profit by the chapter of accidents; and separate from our companions only when the sole alternatives left are the dissolution of our Union with them, or submission to a government without limitation of powers. Between these two evils, when we must make a choice, there can be no hesitation. But, in the meanwhile, the States should be watchful to note every material usurpation on their rights; to denounce them as they occur in the most peremptory terms; to protest against them as wrongs to which our present submission shall be considered, not as acknowledgments or precedents of right, but as a temporary yielding to the lesser evil, until their accumulation shall outweigh that of separation."

When this doctrine of secession, now so strenuously urged here, was first broached in South Carolina, nearly twenty years ago, Gen. Jackson declared his opinion of it in his famous proclamation, a few extracts from which I propose to read; premising that whilst, as a *political movement*, I have ever approved the issuance of the proclamation, and whilst I have always given my sanction to most of the doctrines contained therein, there are yet other portions of that document to which I have never given my full assent, and which were objected to very strongly, as I recollect, by the venerable editor of the Richmond Enquirer of that period, whom I am glad to see personally present. What I am about to read I desire to be understood as endorsing most fully:

"The Constitution of the United States, then, forms a *government*, not a league; and whether it be formed by compact between the States, or in any other manner, its character is the same. It is a government in which all the people are represented, which operates directly on the people individually—not upon the States; they retained all the power they did not grant. But each State, having expressly parted with so many powers as to constitute, jointly with the other States, a single nation, cannot from that period possess any right to secede, because such secession does not break a league, but destroys the unity of a nation; and any injury to that unity is not only a breach which would result from the contravention of a compact, but it is an offence against the whole Union. To say that any State may at pleasure secede from the Union is to say that the United States are not a nation; because it would be a solecism to contend that any part of a nation might dissolve its connexion with the other parts, to their injury or ruin, without committing any offence. Secession, like any other revolutionary act, may be morally justified by the extremity of oppression; but to call it a constitutional right is confounding the meaning of terms, and can only be done through gross error, or to deceive those who are willing to assert a right, but would pause before they made a revolution, or incur the penalties consequent on a failure.

"Because the Union was formed by compact, it is said the parties to that compact may, when they feel themselves aggrieved, depart from it; but it is precisely because it is a compact that they cannot. A compact is an agreement or binding obligation. It may, by its terms, have a sanction or penalty for its breach, or it may not. If it contains no sanction, it may be broken with no other consequence than moral guilt; if it have a sanction, then the breach incurs the designated or implied penalty. A league between independent nations, generally, has no sanction other than a moral one; or, if it should contain a penalty, as there is no common superior, it cannot be enforced. A government, on the contrary, always has a sanction, expressed or implied; and, in our case, it is both necessarily implied and expressly given. An attempt by force of arms to destroy a government is an offence, by whatever means the constitutional compact may have been formed; and such government has the right, by the law of self-defence, to pass acts for punishing the offender, unless that right is modified, restrained, or resumed by the constitutional act. In our system, although it is modified in the case of treason, yet authority is expressly given to pass all laws necessary to carry its powers into effect, and under this grant provision has been made for punishing acts which obstruct the due administration of the laws.

"It would seem superfluous to add anything to show the nature of that union which connects us; but as erroneous opinions on this subject are the foundation of doctrines the most destructive

to our peace, I must give some further development to my views on this subject. No one, fellow-citizens, has a higher reverence for the reserved rights of the States than the magistrate who now addresses you. No one would make greater personal sacrifices, or official exertions to defend them from violation; but equal care must be taken to prevent, on their part an improper interference with, or resumption of, the rights they have vested in the nation. The line has not been so distinctly drawn as to avoid doubts in some cases of the exercise of power. Men of the best intentions and soundest views may differ in their construction of some parts of the Constitution; but there are others on which dispassionate reflection can leave no doubt. Of this nature appears to be the assumed right of secession. It rests, as we have seen, on the alleged undivided sovereignty of the States, and on their having formed in this sovereign capacity a compact which is called the Constitution, from which, because they made it, they have the right to secede. Both of these positions are erroneous, and some of the arguments to prove them so have been anticipated."

General Jackson, it will be recollected, was a native of South Carolina—a fact which I commend to the consideration of the honorable Senator from South Carolina, (Mr. BUTLER,) who has, with so much apparent exultation, cited the conduct of Bernadotte in refusing to enter the confines of France in hostile array, on a memorable occasion, on account of his being a Frenchman by birth. It would seem that General Jackson, though born in the Waxaw settlement in South Carolina, did not at all doubt what his duty would be as President of the United States, in the event of an armed resistance to the laws occurring in that State. Doubtless his feelings were deeply pained at being thrown into conflict with his native State, and he would gladly have avoided the employment even of ungracious language towards her, could he have done so without incurring his own self-condemnation. Listen to his pathetic and solemn words:

"Fellow-citizens of my native State, let me not only admonish you, as the first magistrate of our common country, not to incur the penalty of its laws, but use the influence that a father would over his children whom he saw rushing to certain ruin. In that paternal language, with that paternal feeling, let me tell you, my countrymen, that you are deluded by men who are either deceived themselves, or wish to deceive you. Mark under what pretences you have been led to the brink of insurrection and treason on which you stand!"

Again, he says:

"Eloquent appeals to your passions, to your State pride, to your native courage, to your sense of real injury, were used to prepare you for the period when the *mask* which concealed the hideous features of *DISUNION* should be taken off. It fell, and you were made to look with complacency on objects which, not long since, you would have regarded with horror. Look back at the arts which have brought you to this state—look forward to the consequences to which it must inevitably lead? Look back to what was first told you as an inducement to enter into this dangerous course. The great political truth was repeated to you, that you had the revolutionary right of resisting all laws that were palpably unconstitutional and intolerably oppressive: it was added that the right to nullify a law rested on the same principle, but that it was a peaceable remedy! This character which was given to it made you receive, with too much confidence, the assertions that were made of the unconstitutionality of the law and its oppressive effects."

I will now read the concluding paragraphs of the proclamation, and invoke from honorable Senators their most serious attention thereto:

"The laws of the United States must be executed. I have no discretionary power on the subject; my duty is emphatically pronounced in the Constitution. Those who told you that you might peaceably prevent their execution deceived you; they could not have been deceived themselves. They know that a forcible opposition could alone prevent the execution of the laws, and they know that such opposition must be repelled. Their object is disunion; but be not deceived by names: disunion, by armed force, is *TREASON*. Are you really ready to incur its guilt? If you are, on the heads of the instigators of the act be the dreadful consequences; on their heads be the dishonor, but on yours may fall the punishment; on your unhappy State will inevitably fall all the evils of the conflict you force upon the Government of your country. It cannot accede to the mad project of disunion, of which you would be the first victims; its first magistrate cannot, if he would, avoid the performance of his duty; the consequences must be fearful for you, distressing to your fellow-citizens here, and to the friends of good government throughout the world. Its enemies have beheld our prosperity with a vexation they could not conceal; it was a standing refutation of their slavish doctrines, and they will point to our discord with the triumph

of malignant joy. It is yet in your power to disappoint them. There is yet time to show that the descendants of the Pinckneys, the Sumpters, the Rutledges, and of the thousand other names which adorn the pages of your revolutionary history, will not abandon that Union, to support which so many of them fought, and bled, and died. I adjure you, as you honor their memory—as you love the cause of freedom, to which they dedicated their lives—as you prize the peace of your country, the lives of its best citizens, and your own fair fame, to retrace your steps. Snatch from the archives of your State the disorganizing edict of its convention; bid its members to reassemble, and promulgate the decided expressions of your will to remain in the path which alone can conduct you to safety, prosperity, and honor; tell them that, compared to disunion, all other evils are light, because that brings with it an accumulation of all; declare that you will never take the field unless the star spangled banner of your country shall float over you—that you will not be stigmatized when dead, and dishonored and scorned while you live, as the authors of the first attack on the Constitution of your country. Its destroyers you cannot be. You may disturb its peace—you may interrupt the course of its prosperity—you may cloud its reputation for stability—but its tranquillity will be restored, its prosperity will return, and the stain upon its national character will be transferred, and remain an eternal blot on the memory of those who caused the disorder.

“Fellow-citizens of the United States. The threat of unhallowed disunion—the names of those, once respected, by whom it is uttered—the array of military force to support it—denote the approach of a crisis in our affairs, on which the continuance of our unexampled prosperity, our political existence, and perhaps that of all free governments, may depend. The conjuncture demanded a free, a full, and explicit enunciation, not only of my intentions, but of my principles of action; and as the claim was asserted of a right by a State to annul the laws of the Union, and even to secede from it at pleasure, a frank exposition of my opinions in relation to the origin and form of our Government, and the construction I give to the instrument by which it was created, seemed to be proper. Having the fullest confidence in the justness of the legal and constitutional opinion of my duties which has been expressed, I rely with equal confidence on your undivided support in my determination to execute the laws; to preserve the Union by all constitutional means; to arrest, if possible, by moderate, but firm measures, the necessity of a recourse to force; and if it be the will of Heaven that the recurrence of its primeval curse on man for the shedding of a brother's blood should fall upon our land, that it be not called down by any offensive act on the part of the United States.

“Fellow-citizens! The momentous case is before you. On your undivided support of your Government depends the decision of the great question it involves—whether your sacred Union will be preserved, and the blessing it secures to us as one people shall be perpetuated. No one can doubt that the unanimity with which that decision will be expressed will be such as to inspire new confidence in republican institutions, and that the prudence, the wisdom, and the courage which it will bring to their defence will transmit them unimpaired and invigorated to our children.

“May the Great Ruler of nations grant that the signal blessings with which He has favored ours may not, by the madness of party or personal ambition, be disregarded and lost! And may His wise providence bring those who have produced this crisis to see the folly before they feel the misery of civil strife, and inspire a returning veneration for that Union which, if we may dare to penetrate His designs, He has chosen as the only means of attaining the high destinies to which we may reasonably aspire!”

I hope that I shall not be understood as advising force to be employed in any particular case. I should profoundly regret that any necessity for its employment should arise. Indeed, for my own part, if the State of South Carolina is determined to secede, as her geographical location is such as to allow the movement to take place with comparatively little injury to the rest of the States, I should be rather in favor of permitting her to make the experiment. I am confident that when she shall have tested the advantages of a *separate nationality* for a year or two, she will ask to be readmitted again into the Union, and will never afterwards resort to her favorite remedy of *secession*.

And now, Mr. President, having declared my own views touching this contested doctrine of secession, and having, as I think, strongly fortified myself by authority, I shall proceed to show the real nature of the movements commenced by certain persons in South Carolina, from the criminality of whose conduct I cheerfully exempt the State herself, as one of the sovereign members of the Confederacy, who I hope will never consent to be deluded by the mad teachers who are now endeavoring to seduce her citizens into the perpetration of high treason; for treason it

will certainly be, as I shall show most conclusively, whenever they attempt to act out their present fiery resolves. Thank God! the "*mask*," as General Jackson calls it in his proclamation, which, a short time since, "*concealed the hideous features of DISUNION*," has now been taken off. Since the sittings of the Nashville Convention terminated, that mask has fallen from the faces of Messrs. Rhett and others who went to Nashville with the language of patriotism upon their lips; but who, I fear, concealed treasonable intents in their bosoms; and now the whole South will look with just and salutary horror upon the conduct of those who have aimed to involve the Republic in ruin.

Mr. President, it could scarcely be expected of one who rises, as I have now done, altogether unexpectedly, and upon the spur of the moment, to deliver his views in a very connected manner, or, as the Senator from Florida (Mr. YULEE) would say, "in strict logical sequence." At any rate, in what I have further to say, I beg leave to be recognised as *intentionally* disregarding all the nicer rules of method and arrangement. Hoping that no one will now expect from me an exemplification of the *lucidus ordo*, I proceed to enter upon a miscellaneous field of observation, that I hope will not prove altogether barren and unfruitful.

Sir, the honorable Senator from Virginia (Mr. MASON) has talked a great deal about Southern sentiment, &c. Now, I do not by any means profess to be better acquainted than everybody else in the world with the present condition of the public mind in the South; but I feel authorized to declare most confidently that in my own State, always a loyal and patriotic State, at least ninety-nine hundredths of the people, without regard to party, are in favor of that plan of adjustment which has been so unhappily defeated by a strange and unnatural combination between the abolitionists of the North and the Southern ultras. This will be ascertained more perfectly hereafter, when an opportunity shall be accorded to me of meeting my honored constituents face to face, and challenging my calumniators to regular controversy. The small number of shallow-minded, factious, and aspiring demagogues who have combined against this measure for the most selfish and dishonest purposes of selfish ambition, I intend to reduce to their proper grade and condition when I shall once more be allowed to leave this field of arduous labor, and enjoy an opportunity of talking to my honest and manly constituency in the language of patriotic and unreserved freedom. Meanwhile, I beg leave to say to the Senator from Virginia that I have not been by any means an unmindful observer of public movements in my native State, of which he is a worthy representative in this body; and accident, or some other cause, has brought me into very special acquaintanceship with the state of popular sentiment, in regard to the bill which he yesterday aided in defeating, in his own particular vicinage. I believe that the county of Shenandoah was part of the honorable gentleman's district when a member of the other House. [Here Mr. MASON nodded assent.] Now, sir, it so happens that I was invited the other day to attend a public meeting in that county, for the purpose of discussing this same Adjustment Bill. I regretted most profoundly that my engagements here prevented my compliance with the invitation received. But I have been more than recompensed for any chagrin which arose from this source by the fact that I have since been placed in possession of the proceedings of the meeting which assembled on that occasion, from which it would seem to be inferrible that the im-

mortal *Tenth Legion* of Virginia is at least to be relied upon to a man, at this crisis, for the preservation of the Union. The neighboring counties seem to harmonize admirably with Shenandoah; and I feel peculiar pride in announcing to the Senate, that my own native county of Fauquier is almost as unanimous on this subject as Shenandoah—some evidence of which is supplied by the fact that the humble individual now addressing the Senate has been recently invited, by gentlemen of both the great national parties, to a public dinner in that county, simply on account of his zealous and persevering activity in support of the bill of adjustment. But to return to the county of Shenandoah. Let me read from the newspaper which I hold in my hand an account of the meeting referred to; for what I am about to read will enable the Senator from Virginia to learn at least the condition of public sentiment in his own vicinage. To commence:

“The chairman explained the object of the meeting at considerable length, touching upon the various subjects that had any bearing on the question which had brought us to the present crisis, and which caused the people to assemble here to-day to give an expression of their views as to the best measure which would be likely to settle the question of slavery, about which the North and the South have been contending for some years. Upon the conclusion of his remarks, on motion of Major J. S. Calvert, a committee of thirteen was appointed [they have so much respect for us that they take our number of a committee—13] to report a preamble and resolutions, which was accordingly done, and a copy of these resolutions I will forward to you in a few days.

“A number of letters were read to the meeting from distinguished gentlemen, which I presume will hereafter be published. Resolutions were passed in favor of the Compromise Bill, or any other practicable measure, having for its object the adjustment of this vexed question, which now threatens the stability of the Union; also denouncing the recent proceedings in South Carolina, having for their object the dissolution of the Union; and also denouncing all ultraism and fanaticism, North and South. The spirit of compromise, conciliation, and mutual concession was the ruling spirit which animated the minds of men throughout the whole meeting. The preamble and resolutions were all adopted by a unanimous vote. All was harmony and union. It was truly, and in every sense of the word, a ‘Union mass meeting.’ Huzzah for the Tenth Legion.”

I have received those resolutions; and I undertake to say that they are just as orthodox resolutions as ever were adopted by a public meeting. I will read them to the Senate. Here they are:

“Whereas there are subjects of the most grave and serious character at present unsettling opinion and dividing the public councils. And whereas it is not only the privilege but the imperious duty of every good citizen to watch with anxious concern, the slightest movement which tends to impair, to change, or to subvert principles which he deems immutable, and institutions which he has learned to reverence. While we believe that the blind enthusiasm arrayed against the interests and the institutions of the South has neither been dictated by humanity nor kindled at the altar of patriotism—while we greatly applaud the invincible spirit which still guards with the sword of reason and eloquence that frontier of *reserved rights* defined with so much perspicuity in our federal compact—on the other hand we are deeply penetrated with a rational conviction that the spirit of moderation, of mutual *concession* and *compromise*, is the true and eternal philosophy of social prosperity and happiness. While we would denounce every wild and premature innovation, every encroachment on the established usages of society, so pregnant with pernicious consequences, yet, in an age of unparalleled *progress*, when all the elements of active enterprise are advancing with a rapidity unexampled in former times, we are prepared to admit that ardent minds will naturally indulge the most sanguine anticipations; and with their Utopian schemes of universal freedom and equality, will strive to subvert the salutary systems of experience. Until quite recently the great charter of our Confederation has ever been revered and appealed to with profound respect and veneration. It has been hallowed as the living testimony of national emancipation—the sacred shrine and perpetual record of the accumulated wisdom of ages. But the time has come, we are pained to discover, when men of eminent abilities and extensive influence burl at each other, in moments of exasperated feeling, the most fearful menaces and denunciations. We deprecate these reckless menaces. We shudder at their frequency and violence. We believe their is not a district in our country so humble or so remote from the scenes of these unfortunate collisions as not to have been thrilled with painful anxiety for the event. And your committee, in the privacy of *their* humble homes, have not been exempt from these alarming apprehensions. We therefore respectfully recommend to your serious consideration the following resolutions:

"1. *Resolved*, That our devotion to that sacred compact which confers weight, character, and stability upon all our domestic institutions is too fervent and too pure to be prostituted to mere local partialities, abstract questions, or territorial difficulties.

"2. *Resolved*, That we have witnessed with feelings of deep regret that ultra and fanatical spirit which reigns in our national legislature on the subject of slavery; that it tends to subvert our free institutions; that it is hostile to the principles of constitutional liberty; and that it is an unholy crusade against the immutable laws of political equality, and worthy of the execration of every enlightened freeman.

"3. *Resolved*, That a spirit of conciliation and compromise should pervade our national councils on subjects which involve the peace and permanency of the Union; and as our Union was the glorious result of mutual concession on the part of our revolutionary fathers, we would invoke Congress to settle, in a spirit equally generous, the delicate questions which are now threatening the existence of our national liberties.

"4. *Resolved*, That we are willing that the Compromise bill now before the United States Senate, or any other practicable measure, be adopted, to give repose to this confederacy of States, on principles of equality and justice.

"5. *Resolved*, That we maintain the broad platform of NON-INTERVENTION, the only indubitable ground recognised on this subject by the Constitution, and that the establishment by Congress of a boundary line of slavery is utterly adverse to the spirit of our Confederacy.

"6. *Resolved*, That those eminent men who have nobly asserted and maintained in the councils of the nation our inviolable rights and privileges with fearless and eloquent fidelity, do most richly merit the approbation and gratitude of this meeting.

"7. *Resolved*, That a copy of the preamble and resolutions and other proceedings be transmitted by the presiding officers to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

"Hon. Green B. Samuels then addressed the meeting in an interesting and appropriate speech, and concluded by offering the following additional resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That we are determined to adhere to the Union of these States so long as it shall be a Union of equality and justice.

"*Resolved*, That we denounce the proceedings in Charleston, South Carolina, which have for their purpose the dissolution of the Union, as treasonable, and as such, deserving the execration of every patriot in America.

"The question upon the passage of the resolutions, offered by the Committee of Thirteen was called; when they were again read, and submitted to vote, passed unanimously.

"The resolutions of Mr. Samuels were then submitted, and passed without a dissenting voice."

Now, sir, I have only one remark to make upon this meeting in Shenandoah, and that is this: I feel perfectly assured that no such meeting, so large, and yet so unanimous, has yet been held in Virginia in *opposition* to our plan of adjustment. Indeed, I feel that there is good reason for believing that public sentiment in the Old Dominion in regard to this measure is very nearly everywhere correspondent with this movement of the *Tenth Legion*; and I would politely and kindly admonish the Senator from Virginia (until he shall become better informed of what that portion of the people who inhabit his own region think of the measure under consideration) that he will not venture again to speak so confidently for the *whole South*, and especially for my own State, to whose borders, I believe, he has never yet travelled.

But, sir, let me pass under review, for a moment, some of the proceedings of public meetings recently held in South Carolina. They are, indeed, peculiar and striking in several respects. I beg, whilst I speak of the action of these meetings, and of the movements of certain individuals in South Carolina, that I may not again be charged—as I have been once heretofore charged—with assailing a sovereign State. Well, sir, those who have at all observed the proceedings of public meetings in South Carolina could not have failed to notice that, amidst the bold and high-spirited people who therein abide, (a portion of whom seem to imagine that there is no intellect, no patriotism, no eloquence, no anything of a nature to impart dignity to man, as a moral and social being, beyond the territorial boundaries of the sacred Palmetto State,) there are comparatively but few persons who content themselves with taking the ground that a sovereign State may secede from the Union in the event of the Wilmot proviso being adopted, or other kindred measures.

Nearly the whole population go much further—I might almost say infinitely further. They contend that *a single State may, whenever she chooses to do so, put an end to the union, concord, and happiness of twenty millions of people, whether there are aggressions to complain of or not.* This is undeniably a new phase of the disunion doctrine which the exciting circumstances of the present times have served to develop, and which inflamed sensibilities and weak heads can alone account for. Mr. Barnwell Rhett, well known here at one time as a self-sufficient, but very uninfluential member of the House of Representatives, avows himself a disunionist *per se*, and seems to imagine himself capable of wielding all the physical and moral power of South Carolina against the Union. This may be so, or may not be so; but whether this gentleman has over-estimated his capability of public mischief or not, I rather think that the solid fabric of the Union will be apt to stand in spite of all assaults which he may make upon it.

This is to me quite an interesting topic, and I hope will prove neither uninteresting nor unentertaining to the Senate. Let me read to you a few extracts from the newspapers of that State, which I fear express the public sentiment reigning there at this unhappy period. First, I will read an article from the Charleston Mercury, the leading organ of a certain faction in South Carolina, of which paper I feel authorized to say, that in my judgment a more flagitious, unprincipled, and treasonable paper has never been printed anywhere in Chistendom. The article which I am about to read is a communication, but is apparently sanctioned by the editor. Here it is:

“THE REMEDY.—Ought, Messrs. Editors, the South to accept the extension of the Missouri¹ Compromise line to the Pacific as a settlement of the slavery question? I think not. The compromise adopted on the admission of Missouri has failed to secure us against the encroachments of the Northern States. It has already been tried, and has proved ineffectual. Why try it again? Why should we again suffer ourselves to be lulled into a fatal slumber, to awaken after a time, and find ourselves weaker and our enemies stronger? It is my opinion that the North will consent to no compromise which the South ought to accept. Let us open our eyes to the truth. If the institution of slavery is to be maintained and strengthened, instead of being gradually weakened and finally abolished, the union between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States *must be dissolved!* Let us, then, assume the attitude and speak the language of freemen conscious of their strength. Let us require an amendment to the Constitution.”

And yet I was denounced some time ago because I said some Southerners demanded certain amendments to the Constitution, and that, if they could not obtain them, they would be in favor of disunion. But sequent events have proved that what I said was true.

The article then goes on to say:

“If that cannot be obtained, let the Southern States give notice to the Northern, that they “resume the powers granted under the Constitution, since they have been perverted to their injury and oppression,” and proceed at once to elect delegates to frame a constitution for the “Southern United States of North America.”

Mr. BUTLER. From what paper did the gentleman read?

Mr. FOOTE. From the Charleston Mercury.

Mr. BUTLER. Is that “South Carolina?”

Mr. FOOTE. It is in South Carolina.

Mr. BUTLER. Is that “South Carolina?”

Mr. FOOTE. Not at all.

Mr. BUTLER. What is the signature to that article?

Mr. FOOTE. “*Anti-Compromise.*”

Mr. BUTLER. Ah! I thought the Senator was speaking of the anonymous writer “South Carolina.”

Mr. FOOTE. The honorable gentleman is mistaken. I did not say any such thing. I did not say that the Charleston Mercury was South Carolina. I said it was the leading organ of a treasonable faction in South Carolina. And I now say that the columns of that paper furnish evidence in proof of what I have now stated. Does the gentleman repudiate the paper?

Mr. BUTLER. Not at all.

Mr. FOOTE. If the gentleman did, the paper would repudiate him in turn, and he might lose as much as he would gain by the proceeding. [Laughter.] Then, the paper, not standing repudiated, stands tacitly sanctioned now. Where is the gentleman at this moment? Has he gained any advantage worth boasting of by his unseasonable interrogations?

I now propose to read one or two toasts drunk at public meetings in South Carolina, which may be looked upon as more or less indicative of public sentiment there. These toasts need defence very much, in my judgment; and I must be allowed to say, that when my absent friends are assailed in my presence as I intend to assail the drinkers of these toasts, I would defend them, or acknowledge them frankly to have been guilty of conduct indefensible, just as I would defend the honorable Senator from South Carolina, as he well knows, if he should happen to be unjustly assailed in my hearing.

Mr. BUTLER. I wish to say now, at the beginning, that I do not intend to be the defender, advocate, and eulogist of everybody in South Carolina. I shall stand up for South Carolina. So far as her sentiments are expressed, I am, in some measure, responsible for them. If I were to take newspaper testimony, I might very easily read freely from some in Mississippi; and discount, in law, is always considered a pretty good plea.

Mr. FOOTE. Very well, sir. There is no paper in the State of Mississippi that has ever published such sentiments. An editor could not live in the State that would publish such sentiments. I hope never to see a man who would offer such sentiments to a public meeting on the Fourth of July. Here is one of the toasts I was about to read:

"By Sergeant [remember he is a sergeant] B. F. Boyce.—*The Union*: The time is fully come. Let us cut asunder the accursed knots which bind us to northern fanaticism and oppression, and spurn their fragments."

"Sidney," in the Macon (South Carolina) Telegraph, hails Mr. Rhett's speech with delight, and exclaims, "Let us dissolve the Union and be done with it." *Who dare say that here?* The same writer continues:

"To the able and fearless statesman who has spoken to us in the language of patriotic truth, and has called upon his fellow-citizens of his State, and of the whole South, to join him in enforcing the *only remedy* for all our crushing wrongs now within our reach—*a dissolution of the Union*—I say, "Advance! My hand is feeble, but whatever of strength it has is his!"

Sir, let me next allude to a speech of a gentleman whose eloquence is very much commended. The very particular mention he made of me seems to render it necessary that I should say something of the speech of Colonel Maxcy Gregg, of Columbia, South Carolina. After talking some time about the Nashville Convention, he goes on to say:

"*Perhaps, however, California by itself might be admitted. In that event, we ought to secede and take it by force.*"

Yes, sir, this gentleman proposes that if California should be admitted, South Carolina should secede and take it by force. (Laughter.) He then says:

"*If nothing is done at the present Congress, we ought to pursue the same course.*"

Yes, if nothing at all is done, he tells them they ought to pursue the same course. [Laughter.] This is the imposing menace of one of the "chiv-

alry" of South Carolina. I have really wished, since I saw this outbreak of heroism, that the author of "Don Quixote" could be revived from the tomb, for the purpose of giving us another delicious romance on Knight Errantry, or rather *American chivalry*, or, if the gentleman will allow me, "*South Carolina Chivalry*." I do not know whether or not the speaker from whom I have quoted actually belongs to the "chivalry" himself; but he seems to use brave words, and would doubtless make them good upon any equal field. Colonel Gregg goes on to say:

"Other modes of resistance might be proposed and adopted; but, in the event of their inefficiency, other and more decisive steps would be taken."

How very valorous! How alarmingly menacing!

MR. BUTLER. If the honorable Senator wishes to know who Colonel Gregg is, I will tell him.

MR. FOOTE. I think I know him very well from this speech. [Laughter.]

MR. BUTLER. Colonel Gregg is a man of high character. He would make true his word on any field. He was an officer in Mexico. I know of no man of more remarkable purity of character than Col. Gregg. He may have these warm sentiments; but there is no man that has a purer character.

MR. FOOTE. Undoubtedly. I would not have noticed him if I had not supposed that he was a distinguished man. (Laughter.) I am adducing testimony. The gentleman's course of defence is more than judicious; it is exceedingly generous. Instead of endeavoring to call in question or weaken the testimony brought forward against him, he comes forward voluntarily for the purpose of bolstering up testimony which is strong enough to accomplish its purpose without his aid. I certainly do not doubt in the least that Col. Gregg is an eminent man, an accomplished gentleman, and possessed of all the high qualities of head and heart which his friends may attribute to him. I only say that his views, acted out, however conscientiously entertained, would, in my judgment, amount to treason. It is not my intention to use language of personal decial or insult. By no means. My respect for the honorable Senator from South Carolina, if no other motives, would preclude me from the use of language which would convey a personal affront. I am speaking of public acts, though, and must be allowed to speak with becoming freedom. And I say, further, that such high testimony as is furnished by Col. Gregg appears to be well entitled to regard, when we are inquiring into the actual condition of public sentiment in the State of South Carolina. Can the honorable gentleman from Virginia defend the language which this gentleman uses? Would any man in the Old Dominion use or justify such treasonable language? But Col. Gregg then went on to say:

"We had no need to fear a war springing out of the formation of a new government; that we had the right to secede; and if it were necessary and advisable, it did not become ~~max~~ to be deterred from exercising it."

Colonel Gregg goes on to say:

"Besides, if a war should come, it must terminate favorably to the South. It must do so, because we were a more warlike people than our opponents, and would have that decided advantage attendant upon superior spirit and valor. (!) Moreover we were an agricultural people, while our opponents were engaged in manufactures and commerce; and the former always have the advantage over the latter in a protracted struggle. This he illustrated by a reference to the Carthaginian war. [Very classical.] Besides this, we have the mouth of the Mississippi river. [They have got the mouth of the Mississippi river in South Carolina! (Laughter.) I did not suppose that two hundred men in South Carolina had ever seen the mouth of that noble river at all."]

To repeat, he says :

"Besides this, we have the mouth of the Mississippi river, (!) and by this means can blockade the whole Northwestern States." (!)

Yes, gentlemen of the Northwest, you are in imminent danger of an armed blockade, to be set on foot by a South Carolina major or colonel, (I do not know exactly which,) and you ought at once to prepare yourselves for the process of having your egress to the ocean hermetically obstructed by the chivalry of South Carolina ! (Great laughter.)

This is really, Mr. President, about the most laughable speech I ever read ; and its power of awakening ludicrous emotion is greatly enhanced by the fact that the orator is one of the remaining great men of South Carolina. Mr. Gregg talks as flippantly about seizing the mouth of the Mississippi river, and blockading the Northwestern States, as some urchin would of spinning his top, or a miss in her teens of hemming her sampler. Why, sir, this thing of seizing upon and holding the mouth of the majestic Mississippi is more than all the nations of Europe could do by conjunctive action ; and I would like to advertise our good friends of South Carolina, that those who dwell upon the Mississippi and its tributaries are connected by indissoluble bonds. *Those whom God has joined together disunionists cannot rend asunder.* Mr. Gregg says that "the issue might come sooner than the adjournment of Congress, and be decided with the controversy between New Mexico and Texas." This sagacious suggestion should enforce upon us the importance of an immediate adjustment of this delicate and dangerous boundary question. Let us at once remove the only remaining pretext of the least plausibility for the perpetration of treason. But Mr. Gregg continues:

"The struggle would then become a general one, and we would be justified in seizing upon any part of the public territory ; and it was easy to say where the people of South Carolina and the Kershaw district would be at that day, since the exhibition given during the war with Mexico."

It seems that a Colonel Chesnut then addressed the meeting ; and a more flatulent, bombastic speech was never delivered, even in the Kershaw district, South Carolina. The gentleman is really all *bounce*, and bravado, and bellowing audacity. He raves like a bedlamite, squeaks like a luckless pig caught between two sturdy fence rails, and *pops* like a very *chestnut* when thrown into the fire without a previous splitting of the hull. On reading this speech of Mr. Chesnut, it really distressed me to think that I had never heard of him before, nor had even ever conjectured that there might be some gentleman somewhere to be found of his precise cognomen. This gentleman seems to be a military personage, too, and is undoubtedly one of the *real chivalry*. Listen, if you please, to the account given of him and his speech :

"Colonel Chesnut then followed in a speech of great interest and much brilliancy, defending the convention from the charge of being a treasonable meeting ; which charge had been made at the North, while the people there were allowed to meet at any place, in any way, and for any purpose, without being liable to any such charge. He then spoke of the causes which had rendered a convention of the Southern States necessary ; how the Northern States had proved recreant to the trust reposed in them by the South, and passed laws, energetic and effective, to defeat the binding obligations of a solemn treaty, made and ratified voluntarily between them ; how they had by this means robbed us of our property--were destroying our peace and jeoparding our lives ; how the United States Government had been violently and fraudulently wrested from its legitimate purposes and objects, and made a mere machine in their own hands to advance and subserve these purposes ; how, by the fiscal action of the Government, large amounts of money were unjustly abstracted from the South, and profusely lavished on the North, by which means she was robbed in borrowed magnificence ; that the North had been encouraged in this mode of procedure by the divisions prevailing at the South and among the Southern Representatives in Congress ;

that the South had looked—long and vainly looked—to the solemn guaranties of that Constitution, revered and held sacred by her, for protection from these aggressions; but that these, though strong, were insufficient to defend her against the fanatical spirit of the North, encouraged as she was by the desertions of *Benton, Foote & Co., &c., &c.*”

I surely ought to be very grateful (?) to Col. Chesnut for enabling me to ascertain my precise standing in South Carolina. I, who aided the Senator from Virginia (Mr. HUNTER) in getting up the Southern meeting eighteen months ago—I, who have assailed in my own feeble way, but zealously and fearlessly, every champion of Abolition on this floor, whether potential or feeble, to the best of my strength—I, who have been formerly commended even here by J. C. Calhoun himself for good intentions and extreme devotion to Southern interests—I, who have incurred more obloquy and malignant ridicule than any Southern man ever did, on account of my fierce and fervid vindication of the rights of the South from assaillment, with whomsoever originating—I, who, for undertaking to vindicate the character of South Carolina's greatest statesman, after he had passed from the stage of earthly action, have been thrown for four months past into a sort of parliamentary *Coventry*. I am now associated in South Carolina with one for whom South Carolina cherishes more hatred and contempt than for any man living or dead! Well, this is the sort of reward that *human justice* commonly bestows, and I am content with it. I will only say that some of the good people of South Carolina as much misunderstand me as they do the questions now before the country for decision.

Mr. President, gentlemen now speak of the Missouri Compromise as an *ultimatum*. So the honorable Senator from Virginia says to-day. Why, I made it my business to consult the honorable Senator from South Carolina who sits nearest to me, (Mr. BARNWELL,) who was a member of the Nashville Convention, when he first came here, (I regret that he is not now in his place,) as to whether the Nashville Convention looked upon the Missouri Compromise line as an *ultimatum*. He said promptly that it was not so recognised by him. I consulted with the President of the Convention, (Chief Justice Sharkey,) who gave me a similar response. So have responded all the delegates to the Convention who have yet reached this city, with whom I have had an opportunity of conversing. And yet honorable gentlemen here, and champions of sedition elsewhere, insist that the Missouri Compromise line, as adopted at Nashville, is an *ultimatum*, and that there is no alternative to its adoption by us, save a dissolution of the Union. Well, sir, though I have always voted for the line of 36 deg. 30 min., when I have had an opportunity, I confess that I never yet in my life thought for a single instant of making it an *ultimatum*; nor can I easily perceive how any person, being possessed of the ordinary quantum of reasoning power, could think of such a thing as a *practical* proposition. The truth is, it is chiefly insisted on with a view to *disunion*, and that the whole country will shortly understand; and when the disunion plot, which I have known to be on foot for several months past, shall be once plainly laid open to the people of the South, both *plot and plotters* will be consigned to undying infamy, or I have read the pages of republican history in vain, and the enlightened freemen of America will prove themselves wholly incapable of that self-government upon which they have heretofore so much prided themselves. May God, in his mercy, save our beloved country from the ruin and degradation in which ambitious and unprincipled demagogues have striven to involve us!